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THE OPERATIONAL MANEUVER GROUP

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**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE
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**AIRLAND BATTLE AND THE
OPERATIONAL MANEUVER GROUP**

by

William G. Hanne

16 May 1983

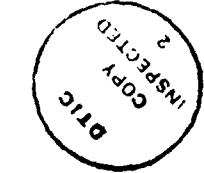
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FOREWORD

This memorandum examines the US Army's operational concept (as embodied in the airland battle) with respect to the Soviet Operational Maneuver Group (OMG). The author examines US Army tactical doctrine as it has evolved from the 1976 timeframe to the present. The "deep attack" approach of the airland battle is discussed in light of both its implications and its dependent relationship with Soviet tactical deployments. The memorandum concludes with the potential strategic implications of both the OMG and proposed solutions, illustrating the linkages among tactics, operational art, and military strategy.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.



RICHARD D. LAWRENCE
Major General, USA
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

COLONEL WILLIAM G. HANNE was assigned as a Strategic Research Analyst with the Strategic Studies Institute following his graduation from the US Naval War College in 1981. He is also a graduate of the US Army War College (DCS, 1980), the US Army Command and General Staff College, the US Military Academy, and earned a master's degree in geography from the University of Illinois. Colonel Hanne has served in various command and staff assignments in the United States, Hawaii, Vietnam, and Germany. He was principal editor and co-author of the *Landscape Atlas of the USSR* and has had articles accepted for publication in *Military Intelligence*, *Military Review*, *Parameters*, and *US Naval Institute Proceedings*.

SUMMARY

In 1982, the US Army published a new version of *FM 100-5: Operations*. The concepts of tactical doctrine, as embodied in this new field manual, were structured to form the airland battle—see deep, attack deep. In May 1982, General Glenn K. Otis, then TRADOC Commander, called upon the Army to read, discuss, and challenge—where appropriate—aspects of the airland battle doctrine of the US Army.

Previous editions of *FM 100-5* had stressed the tactical employment principles—the 1982 edition and the airland battle concept stress operational principles, or corps-level principles of employment. While *FM 100-5* does not address the echeloning of threat forces, the airland battle concept focuses directly on the defeat of such echeloning. And the concept depends heavily upon the predictability of such echeloning, the quantity and accuracy of intelligence, and the availability of forces to “strike deep.”

The Soviet Operational Maneuver Group (OMG) constitutes a direct challenge to both airland battle and to the Army’s operational concept. While the OMG is neither a new tactic nor a newly constituted force, its revitalization presents a series of options that the Soviet front and theater commanders may use to confront NATO’s forward defense. Thus, the presence of the second echelon is not a given, the information available will not be of such a nature as to indicate which Soviet option is being used, and the forces available for a deep attack will have to be weighed accordingly to preclude defeat through attrition.

The employment of the US Army’s operational concept on a battlefield that contains the Soviet Operational Maneuver Group will require solutions that are multifaceted—not just limited to doctrine. Training at the operational level (corps), improvements to the force structure (providing the corps commander with deep attack forces), equipment, and weapons head the list of possible solutions.

AIRLAND BATTLE AND THE OPERATIONAL MANEUVER GROUP

During the past 2 years, the US Army has undergone a rather rapid evolution of doctrine in terms of how the ground conflict, specifically that in Central Europe, will be waged. This evolving doctrine has been set forth in final form in two significant field manuals (*FM 100-1: The Army*, and *FM 100-5: Operations*).

To a significant degree, the 1982 version of *FM 100-5* has its roots in the earlier 1976 version of the same manual. Upon reading the two manuals, however, it is admittedly difficult to perceive any direct linkage between the active defense embodied in the earlier manual and the deep attack philosophy of the more recent version. One aspect of the concealed linkage lies in the fact that the manuals are accurate reflections of the Army at that appropriate time. (A behavioral scientist could develop several doctoral theses out of the argument that the published doctrine reflected the state of the Army after the fact, rather than providing the Army with projected *modus operandi*.) Additional threads of continuity or linkage exist in the overwhelming focus of the manuals on Central Europe, on the acknowledgement that the potential Soviet adversary is numerically superior to US forces, on the role of the forward defense, and that the first battle is still significant.

The 1976 version, however, had an air of pessimism surrounding it; the principal thrust appeared to be captured at the end of Chapter 1 with the phrase: *The US Army must be convinced it will win.*¹ The 1976 version also tacitly acknowledged the political realities of NATO, or more specifically, that of the German Federal Republic—space will not be traded for time. Unfortunately, during the same period of time that the doctrine was being formulated, other factors were assuming larger and larger roles. The “tripwire” responses—the exchange of strategic weapons between the United States and the USSR should the USSR invade Western Europe—had been replaced by the flexible response, and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons designed to enhance that flexibility had been accomplished. Thus, West Europeans, and once again the West Germans in particular, began to realize that conflict in Europe could well mean the nuclear devastation of significant portions of West Germany and nowhere else. The US Army also was rebuilding from the Vietnam period and was facing both the personnel cost increases of a volunteer Army, as well as the modernization problems of deferred R&D and procurement budgets. Hence, in many respects, the first battle and the active defense doctrines were the only appropriate or realistic positions that the Army could take in regard to its NATO obligations.

The Army was also focusing on battalion, brigade, and division activities and, in effect, downgrading corps and echelons above corps (EAC). Theater and field armies and their supporting elements (Theater Army and Field Army Support Commands) were eliminated and the doctrines (to include organizational and operational concepts) for corps and EAC were put on “hold.”

THE OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

With the passage of time and the realization that the average height of Ivan was 68 inches, not 120 inches, efforts were made to develop a tactical doctrine that would take advantage of Soviet doctrinal and weapon weaknesses. Principal among these weaknesses were the perceived inflexibility of Soviet command and control and the rigid echeloning of all forces—tactical through strategic. Thus, in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, the doctrine of the extended battlefield or the airland battle evolved into being.

At the same time, the realization came that the Army was in need of doctrine for corps and EAC operations. However, little was done in these areas other than the publication of coordination drafts of appropriate field manuals. Forward deployed corps (V and VII Corps) were tied to a specific scenario and contingency corps (III, XVIII, and in 1981, I Corps) found themselves being dual-hatted. The planning function of these corps headquarters gradually took a back seat to post and community responsibilities or to test support functions.

There were also numerous outside pressures to develop a new doctrine for the Army. The "tooth-to-tail" debates of 1974, leading to both the Nunn Amendment and the increase of two divisions to the active force, coupled with the perception that the US Army was firepower or attrition-dependent rather than maneuver-oriented, could not help but lead to a doctrine that emphasized maneuver and mobility. So, in 1981, General Starry—then the TRADOC Commander—fired the first salvo in presenting the new doctrine with his article in the March issue of *Military Review* entitled "Extending the Battlefield."

To quote General Starry directly from that article:

The extended battlefield is not a new concept. It is a more descriptive term for indicating the full potential we must realize from our acquisition, targeting and weapons systems. The battlefield and the battle are extended in three ways: First, the battlefield is extended in depth, with engagement of enemy units not yet in contact to disrupt the enemy timetable, complicate command and control and frustrate his plans, thus weakening his grasp on the initiative.

Second, the battle is extended forward in time to the point that current actions such as attack of follow-on echelons, logistical preparation and maneuver plans are interrelated to maximize the likelihood of winning the close-in battle as time goes on.

And, lastly, the range of assets figuring in the battle is extended toward more emphasis on higher level Army and sister service acquisition means and attack resources.

What emerges is a perception of the battlefield in which the goal of collapsing the enemy's ability to fight drives us to unified employment of a wide range of systems and organizations on a battlefield which, for corps and divisions, is much deeper than that foreseen by current doctrine.³

Concurrent with the *Military Review* article, a new version of *FM 100-1: The Army* was being written. On August 14, 1981,

General Meyer, Chief of Staff of the Army, approved the new manual. This field manual set forth not only the *raison d'être* of the Army, but also the principles of war which the Army would use "as a frame of reference for analysis of strategic and tactical issues."³

- Objective
- Mass
- Maneuver
- Security
- Simplicity
- Offensive
- Economy of Force
- Unity of Command
- Surprise

Simultaneously with the publication of *FM 100-1*, the new operations manual, *FM 100-5*, was in coordination draft. This manual combined the various concepts of operations currently in vogue—the extended battlefield, the integrated battlefield, battlefield air interdiction—into one operational concept. This concept is best expressed as the airland battle in which the ground commander sees deep and attacks deep with all available resources, using the joint operational capabilities of both the land forces and the air forces.

However, not only was the Army redefining its operational concept, it was also reintroducing the corps as a major element on the battlefield. The corps, as a major player, had to have parameters within which it would operate. The "operational art" concept was projected as that linkage between the tactical aspects of the division and the strategic aspects of the echelons above corps, thus providing a continuum between the national command authority and the brigade commander.⁴ A simplified description of such a continuum is portrayed in Figure 1.

However, since the Army had effectively abandoned doctrine for corps and echelons above corps since 1974, there was a distinct need to provide some form of written guidance which could be used in a conceptual manner until the new field manuals—*FM 100-15: Corps* and *FM 100-16: Echelons Above Corps*—were staffed, approved, and published. This need initially was met with a May 1982 article in *Military Review* by Lieutenant Colonel John S. Doerfel, "The Operational Art of the Airland Battle." Since *FM 100-5* had defined "operational art" as ". . . the theory and

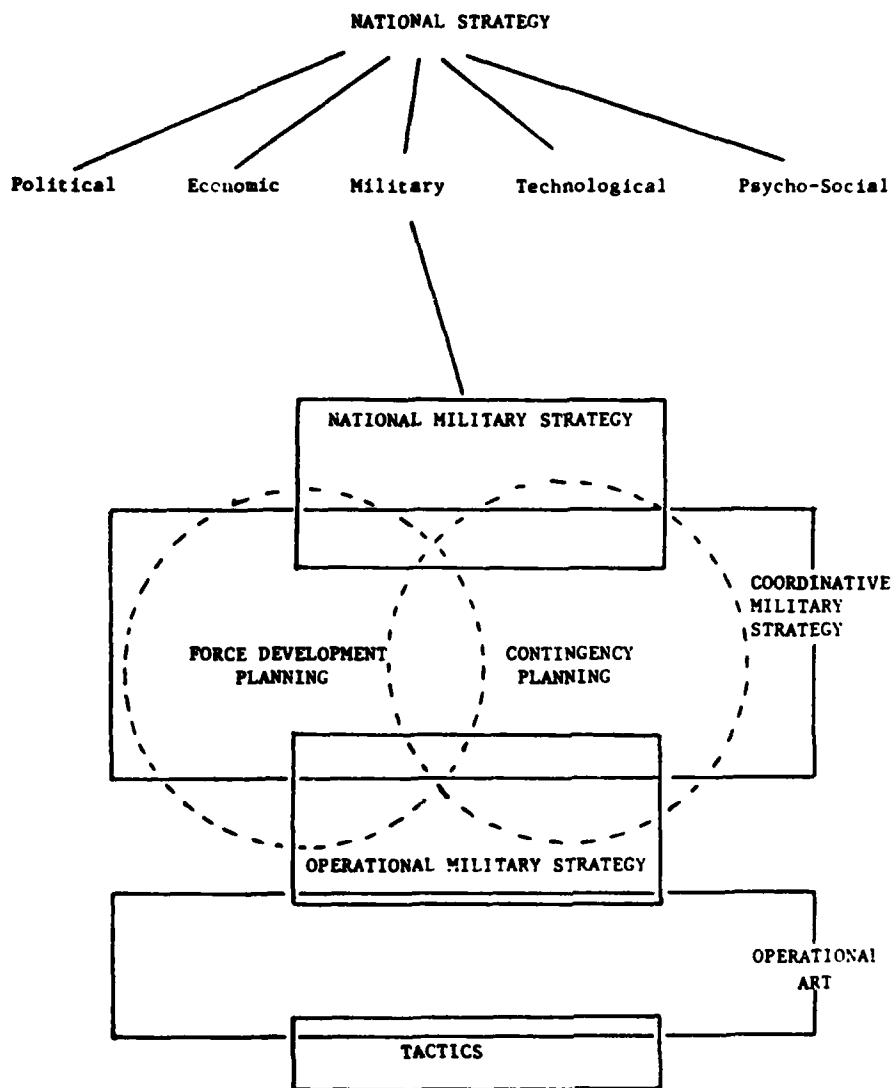


Figure 1.

practice of large unit (army and corps) operations, the use of battles and their results to attain a major military goal,"⁵ Colonel Doerfel's article specifically focused on the operational aspects of the NATO corps against Soviet Theater of Operations (TVD) echelons.

Throughout these articles (and others related to the operational concept), field manuals (less *FM 100-1*), and related studies—such

as TRADOC's *Airland Battle 2000*, dated August 10, 1982—a new confident theme was expressed that, by using our resources against the enemy's vulnerabilities, we would indeed win, not only the first battle but also the last battle. In the case of defending NATO, the major Soviet vulnerabilities or areas of weakness were depicted as the predictable echeloning of forces (from the lowest tactical level up through strategic) and the rigid command and control system. Colonel Doerfel synthesized it best when he outlined the method of attainment used by the Soviet TVD commander to achieve his operational goal:

- Echeloning of units and formations.
- Employing first echelon forces whose primary purpose is to create ruptures or breakthroughs.
- Emphasis on using succeeding echelons to exploit the successes of the first echelon.
- Succeeding echelon success defined as executing high speed, multiroute, deep advance to destroy or fix NATO forces.
- Penetration and exploitation by second echelon forces.⁶

Thus, the NATO corps commander should, by US doctrine, recognize that the second or follow-on echelon is key to the TVD commander's success. The goal or objective of the NATO corps "deep attack" is "force-oriented rather than terrain-oriented."⁷ But even though the objective is force-oriented, the corps commander in his deep attack must avoid decisive engagement and battles of attrition. To perform this mission, the NATO deep attack units must:

- Rapidly transit the forward line of own troops (FLOT).
- Drive deep.
- Conduct lethal and violent attack on the move to destroy high value elements of the uncommitted echelons as they are encountered.
- Refuse decisive engagement.
- Prepare for commitment to continue the attack either on the rear of the first echelon divisions or to the depth of the enemy's formations.⁸

The doctrinal approach is to defeat the Soviet follow-on echelon in detail.

The ponderous weight and operational methods of the Soviet first echelon divisions will prevent their interference with the second echelon battle. We are using the enemy's strength against him.⁹

However, as Lieutenant Colonel L. D. Holder's article, "Maneuver in the Deep Battle" (in the same May 1982 *Military Review*), notes:

The risks involved in employing maneuver forces in the enemy's rear area are obvious. But the potential for success is so great that such operations will be justified in many instances. When directed against high value targets such as enemy reserves, command posts, supply dumps or terrain chokepoints, maneuver forces can produce the windows for offensive action critical to defensive success or preserve the initiative for offensive operations.¹⁰

The risks are indeed obvious and, as Colonel Holder elaborates in his article, the risks of our maneuvering deep within the enemy's echelonment include our operating with less artillery support than normal, operating directly under the enemy's air defense envelope and within the immediate range of his radio-electronic combat units.¹¹ But conducting the deep battle—even with those risks—allegedly, the commander is providing his subordinates the space and time to win and he is creating opportunities for major decisive offensive action.¹² The deep attack is supposed to create a situation for the enemy commander where he is forced to deviate from his plan, where he is confronted with changes that occur so rapidly that he is unable to keep up with it, and, thus, lose the initiative and arrive at "the point chosen for the decisive collapsing blow."¹³ This underlying concept is similar to a Soviet view presented by V. Ye. Savkin in his *Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics*:

Using mathematical methods, it is possible to obtain quantitative estimates of the mobility of control. This task has been resolved by introducing the concept of critical time T_c . This is understood to be the time after which the troop operations will not lead to the assigned goal in general or to the effectiveness which was expected and planned. By using this indicator it is possible to answer the question what it means to control efficiently. This means to see that the sum of time spent on the control cycle, T_{con} , and the time needed by the troops to perform an order received, T_o , is less than the critical time, i.e., the following inequality must be observed: $T_{con} + T_o \leq T_c$.¹⁴

Other tactical and operational art theoreticians, such as US Air Force Colonel John Boyd, have expressed similar ideas, e.g., force one's opponent to make decisions, in the face of a rapidly changing situation, in reaction to one's actions rather than the reverse. The analogy of soccer—as opposed to football—was used to describe this new operational concept. The game of football was described

as one of attrition and brute strength (read: firepower) and soccer was portrayed as a game of speed and mobility (read: maneuver). While it was widely recognized that analogies are not proof, this analogy quickly caught on and appealed to those who were seeking to shift the Army's emphasis from firepower to maneuver. For the sake of clarity, as well as to restate the philosophical concept that analogies are not proof, it should be noted that American football (as opposed to rugby) is not necessarily based on attrition; deception may be a better descriptive term. The team uses a huddle to disseminate the coded plan, the center snaps a ball with surprise timing to a quarterback who, in turn, conceals the ball in order to take advantage of a number of options, of which only a minority rely upon brute offensive strength or attrition. Soccer, on the other hand, relies on perfect intelligence—the ball is seen by virtually all 22 players at the same time, there is only *one* ball on the field and in play at any given time, and the flight of that ball can be predicted with a comparative degree of certainty and time for reaction.

Regardless of the analogies, the operational concept for a US Army corps is simply: move fast, strike hard, finish rapidly. As the coordination draft of *FM 100-15* states:

Corps concentrations must be fleeting to avoid detection and engagement Combat actions must be violent to shock, paralyze, and overwhelm the enemy Speed in operations forces the enemy to react constantly to corps initiatives and changes the situation so frequently that enemy countermeasures are ineffective Relatively it [the corps] must *always* seek to move more rapidly than the enemy army which it is fighting.¹⁵

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

If one of the objectives of the operational concept is to defeat the follow-on echelons in detail, then US or NATO forces must likewise be aware of the same possibility. While engaging enemy troops of the first echelon along the FLOT with his divisions in contact, the corps commander also is preparing to launch a deep attack in an effort to retain or regain the initiative. Due largely to our current force structure, the deep attack force will most likely be composed of the same elements that would make up his reserve or counterattack force. Thus, the commander may well find himself equally open to defeat in detail—not only in the immediate area of the FLOT, but also in the vicinity of the deep attack force. This latter vulnerability can occur if the deep attack force is suddenly

confronted with a sizeable follow-on echelon force or mobile force that engages the deep attack element in a decisive battle.

The lynchpin to that situation, as well as to the entire operational concept, is accurate and timely intelligence on enemy forces, the terrain, and the weather. Unfortunately, in the intervening budget processes and Congressional sessions between General Starry's 1981 article and the time of this paper, the All-Source Analysis System (ASAS), the Standoff Target Acquisition System (SOTAS), and the Tactical Fire Direction Program (TACFIRE) either have been eliminated or emasculated. Granted, new systems are being programmed (i.e., the Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System [JSTARS]), but there is nothing to say that these new programs, too, will not be scrapped before they are in the hands of the troops. But the entire operational concept and the airland battle are dependent upon accurate, timely, and relevant intelligence on enemy forces. Airborne systems or national systems that may or may not be in a continuous orbit are weak reeds to lean on in a storm of such high intensity.

However, recognizing that intelligence resources will be limited always in both number and capabilities in the mid-1970's, the Army tactical intelligence community developed the "templating" process. This process was to narrow the enemy commander's range of options on the battlefield to a manageable number so that what collection resources were available could be used in the most judicious manner. This process became known as the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB). IPB is an analytical tool to "... help the analyst 'visualize' the variables of how the enemy *might* fight on a specific piece of terrain at certain times."¹⁶ It also has been described as "a continuous process of analysis and evaluation which is the basis of intelligence operations planning The purpose of this analysis is to determine and evaluate enemy capabilities, vulnerabilities, and courses of action as the basis for friendly operations planning."¹⁷ The judgmental processes involved in this IPB or analysis are complex and, to a very large degree, ambiguous. To quote TC 30-27:

While the enemy commander may not have unlimited options as to possible courses of action, he will probably have enough options to make the analyst's job of determining probable courses of action extremely difficult. Situation templates are derived based on the *best military judgment of the analyst* (emphasis added).¹⁸

Thus, the corps commander, with limited real time intelligence capabilities at hand and dependent upon the "best military judgment" of the intelligence analyst, finds himself committing a sizeable portion of his operational forces in a deep attack against the critical nodes of the second echelon. The corps commander's concept of operations must emphasize the guidance to avoid decisive engagement, in order to preclude the battle of attrition.

But these arguments are not new, for Colonel (Retired) Trevor Dupuy and Mark Stewart in the August and September 1982 issues of *Armed Forces Journal International* presented two articles which challenged the deep attack concept, Colonel Dupuy's thesis is simply put:

If the Warsaw Pact can defeat our defending forces with their first echelon, it makes no difference if we do any damage to, or delay, the second echelon. If, on the other hand, we are strong enough to be able to stop the first echelon, we could jeopardize that ability if we divert resources to attack the second echelon. Since the difficulties of acquiring, and of hitting, forces deep behind enemy lines are considerably greater than of dealing with those to our immediate front, the resources required for effective long-range attack on the second echelon could be both substantial and expensive.¹⁹

Stewart's argument is more difficult to define—perhaps he puts it best when he, in a call for a debate on the second echelon, states that

disciples of second echelon attack appear to be preaching in a void—without intellectual challenge or an implementing program of any consequence.²⁰

While Stewart may perceive a void in the intellectual arena, the Soviets have filled that space between echelons with a force of their own, thereby eliminating any void. In addition to these articles in the *Armed Forces Journal*, the entire August 1982 edition of *Military Review* was devoted to Soviet tactics and doctrine. However, C. N. Donnelly, in a recent article in the *International Defence Review*, ties together not only the historical perspective, but also the operational aspects of the Soviet answer to Stewart's void. The title of Mr. Donnelly's article describes the situation that confronts the NATO corps commander very well: "The Soviet Operational Maneuver Group: A New Challenge for NATO."

IS IT THE SECOND ECHELON OR IS IT AN OMG?

Throughout the developing US doctrine over the past 5 years, there has been a steady emphasis on the need to prevent the second echelon from piling on and thereby contributing to the success of the Soviet first echelon. The concept now stands where the units in contact are to hold their position while the operational commander seeks out and attacks the critical nodes of the developing second echelon. As pointed out earlier, the Soviet TVD commander allegedly uses echeloning of units and formations at all levels to achieve his operational goal. However, Mr. Donnelly points out in his recent article

... a great deal of confusion surrounds the concept of echeloning due to the unfamiliarity of the term and the concept. *There is no such thing as a second echelon per se.* One must ask 'second echelon of what?' . . . the most significant lesson to be learned from a study of the development of echeloning and combat formations is that this was: (a) *highly variable and flexible*; and (b) based on a careful study of enemy defenses (emphasis added).²¹

Mr. Donnelly's article is not the only such study to raise the issue that the second echelon is *not* an automatic or knee-jerk reaction. Studies and analyses have covered the echeloning of forces, and have determined that once above division and combined arms army levels, second and/or third echelons exist as a "possibility" and are situation-dependent rather than an axiomatic, doctrinal given. If this is the case, that is, that the second echelon of the combined arms army may or may not exist and that the TVD's second echelon is very likely nonexistent, then the "deep attack" may be in a continual "hold" pattern. It would be awaiting the intelligence analyst's best guess as to where the TVD commander's second echelon would be *if* he had one. The limited intelligence resources available would be directed to those areas in a potentially fruitless search for the elusive second echelon. Meanwhile, the opposing divisions are piling on, creating the environment necessary for the employment of an OMG.

The OMG is neither new nor is it, as the Soviet military encyclopedia states, only an "historical" term.²² The origins of the OMG go back to the early days of the Red Army during the Civil War. However, in that period and during World War II, the concept existed under the label of "mobile groups." According to

Donnelly, the early mobile groups on the eastern front were developed in the summer of 1942, were largely tank-heavy, and were developed to get into the German rear areas rapidly and in strength. They were so designed because the German defenses were based on a shallow belt of strongpoints. Once the Soviet mobile groups became successful, the Germans developed their defenses on a nonlinear framework, thereby defeating the initial Soviet attack and its follow-up mobile group. This led to the development of two Soviet attacking echelons and a mobile group, resulting in 1945 in the following standard front formation:

A strong first echelon (two to seven armies), a weaker second echelon (one to two combined arms armies), a mobile group (one to two tank armies or one to two tank and mechanized corps), and a reserve (a tank, mechanized, or rifle corps). An air army was also included in the front order of battle However, when the Germans had a strong tactical zone (first line) of defense but lacked mobile operational reserves on or near the axis of advance, Soviet armies attacked with a single echelon, plus a mobile group (emphasis added).²³

This front formation was clearly on a larger scale than tactics, yet it was not strategic in nature. And the Soviet commanders and staffs working on this scale—planning such operations, and following when the breakthrough occurred—were definitely working at a scale or level much higher than their German opponents. The Soviets devoted a significant part of their effort to planning and functioning at this operational level. At this level (that of army or front) they concentrated their ability to be flexible; and they continue to do so. However, to achieve this flexibility at the operational level, tactical or divisional versatility suffers. As Donnelly continues in his article:

It was this failure [to appreciate the crucial significance of the operational scale of thinking] which, in Soviet eyes, helped accomplish the German defeat. So often the Germans achieved tactical victory over the Soviets, only to suffer defeat on a much larger scale. The air of puzzlement which pervades so many German memoirs—"how could we do so well and yet lose?"—is eloquent testimony to the lack of real understanding of the operational scale.²⁴

Over the years, based apparently on a very detailed study of NATO plans and exercises, the Warsaw Pact (essentially the Soviet Union) began to reemphasize the role of the mobile group, now known in the West as the OMG's. "The similarities between

NATO's extended form of defense and the style of defense adopted by the Germans in both the initial and the later stages of the war serves to make the study of the mobile group even more appropriate."²⁵

Thus, over the past 5 years, within Soviet operational art, the OMG has developed into a force designed specifically to defeat present NATO's forward defense plans. Simply stated, the OMG has a primary role of speeding the advance of the main forces. Donnelly further states that an army-sized OMG, in support of a front, would have the mission of attempting to bring about a very rapid strategic conclusion before NATO forces could obtain nuclear release.²⁶

As Colonel Dupuy points out in his article, the Soviets believe that any combat development must be consistent with the concept of the forthcoming battle.²⁷ Therefore, in many cases, the circumstances may be such as to preclude the development or employment of a second echelon, especially at Army or TVD level. (It should be noted that divisional and regimental deployments are, almost without exception, echeloned; the discussion here is focused on the operational level—armies, fronts, TVD's, and groups.) While the NATO division commander may find himself confronting an echeloned divisional attack, his resources will be such that his emphasis will be on the containment of the attack. In addition, as a unit in contact, the aviation resources essential to carry out an attack on the opposing second echelon are generally not available to him, nor is the intelligence collection requirement geared to the real time needs and pinpoint accuracy required at division level. Those resources and assets are at the NATO corps level and above. These assets will be dedicated toward filling the gaps and covering the required areas indicated in the templating effort developed in the intelligence preparation of the battlefield and may very well be looking for that "elusive" second echelon of the TVD.

To quote directly from General Starry's March 1981 article:

The brigade commander fights first echelon assault regiments. The division commander fights the first echelon assault divisions. The corps commander fights first echelon armies. It is the corps commander's responsibility to find and disrupt the advance of second echelon divisions of first echelon armies before they become a part of the first echelon problem.

At the same time, the corps commander is very interested in where the second echelon army of the *front* is deploying. At corps level, he must tie into national target acquisition systems and other surveillance means to get information concerning where that army is and what it is doing. His primary responsibility in battle fighting has to do with the follow-on echelons.²⁴

What the corps commander may be looking for and what he might see are, in most instances, two different things. As noted earlier, the OMG's (ranging in size from division to army) would most likely be there, in a close, follow-on position, oriented toward the exploitation of the army's first echelon attack. If the corps commander has the real time intelligence capabilities, with the needed accuracy to prosecute his deep attack, his target of opportunity would be the OMG. However, in contrast to the "typical" second echelon units moving into position some 48 to 72 hours from contact, the OMG would be a combat-heavy, combat-ready organization, operating in a heightened mode of anticipation.

Units launched in a deep attack against an OMG could find themselves engaged in a decisive battle without either means of rapid extraction or reinforcement. In a similar manner, if the attack is launched against deep targets in an effort to prevent front reinforcement—critical nodes such as road junctions, bridges, ammunition/fuel resupply points—and the OMG is not taken into consideration or accurately located, then such a deep attack may encounter a situation where the attacking force would be surprised by the OMG. In either case, the deep attack, designed to prevent the piling on of second echelon armies of the front or the TVD, would evolve into a decisive battle, possibly leading to defeat in detail for NATO forces.

The OMG, while designed and planned for deep exploitation of NATO's sensitive chemical, nuclear, and POMCUS units, also can play a major role in setting the strategic environment within Europe. The Warsaw Pact has demonstrated over the years—as has the Soviet army (its principal mentor)—the ability to evolve its tactics and doctrine. In a similar manner, the tactics and doctrine have demonstrated an ability to evolve in such a way as to support the political objectives of the Soviet Union. The OMG has evolved into an organization that is designed to strike rapidly and deep into NATO's rear, thereby capitalizing on predicted difficulties within NATO to obtain tactical nuclear weapons release. By striking deep in a rapid manner, and by causing NATO to react to the Pact's

actions instead of the reverse, the Pact would be denying NATO the use of one of its major assets, the deployability and use of NATO's sizeable reserves.

The early days of NATO and the Warsaw Pact Treaty Organization confrontation saw the development of a strategic nuclear exchange between the United States and the USSR as the guarantee against invasion (in either direction). The gradual development and deployment of tactical nuclear weapons saw a transition from the strategic exchange to a policy of greater flexibility. However, the growing realization that—in the event of a European conflict—the United States and the USSR might not be touched by combat, has led to a situation where the individual nations at ground zero are no longer anxious for that type of flexibility. Yet the units remain in direct contact along the inner German border and Czechoslovak border. If one were to totally remove NATO's potential to use tactical nuclear weapons to contain or seal off a Warsaw Pact penetration, then the distinct advantage would lie with the Pact; unless NATO were to mobilize its reserves in time. The deep attack, with or without its integrated battlefield aspects, was designed to provide some of that critical time. However, as in a game of chess where one move leads to a countermove, the increasing role of the OMG and the resulting flexibility in the capabilities of the TVD commander has led to an offset of that deep attack. (Coupled with this development is the infallible tone in the language of US Army doctrine in regard to our interpretation of Soviet tactics, as well as an increasing dependency on IPB in lieu of functioning collection systems.) Once again, if the tactical nuclear capability is removed from the NATO list of weapons available, then the options available for NATO to buy time for mobilization and deployment become drastically fewer in number.

However, as pointed out in an earlier presentation (*Military Review*, June 1982, "The Integrated Battlefield"), the tactical nuclear option is being presented more and more as an "accepted fact" in planning. This tacit acceptance within published Army doctrine (FM 100-5) of the viability and versatility of tactical nuclear weapons—to say nothing of the numerous articles that have sprung up in support of the new airland battle concept which also consider the use of such weapons as a given—may well be precluding an extended debate on other options, either in terms of doctrine, training, force development, or equipment. The options

which follow attempt to eschew the consideration, as a planning factor, of the employment of tactical nuclear or chemical weapons.

OPTIONS

The development of a conventional deep attack capability, which would limit the effectiveness of either the front's second echelon (if one existed) or the OMG, is one option which needs to be explored further. The development of the Air Force's Conventional Standoff Weapon (CSW) and the Army's Corps Support Weapons System (CSWS), along with SOTAS' joint replacement, Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), are actions along such an option line. Recent articles in both *Armed Forces Journal International* (AFJ) and *International Defense Review* on the "Assault Breaker" program presage a stronger and more enduring interest on the other side of the Atlantic for such systems. According to Mr. Schemmer in his September article in AFJ on "Assault Breaker:"

A key leader of West Germany's CDU/CSU opposition political parties, Dr. Manfred Worner, has suggested in a recently released study of Germany's long-range defense alternatives that West Germany should emphasize a long-range approach similar to Assault Breaker for offsetting the Warsaw Pact's growing advantage and to 'extend the battlefield' beyond German soil.

Worner said that it used to require about 5,500 aircraft sorties delivering 33,000 tons of gravity bombs to destroy a Soviet army group exploiting a breakthrough. Current improved munitions, he said, lets that job be done with about 600 sorties and only 3,000 tons of ammunition. But the next generation of terminally guided antiarmor submunitions, he said, will require only 50-100 sorties and about 500 tons of munition . . . Thus, Worner argues, the new technology provides a way for NATO to 'reduce significantly the number of short-range nuclear systems' on which it now depends, but which bother West Germans because most would be exploded on German soil in the event of a Soviet attack."

Another option—other than using manpower to conduct an attack against the OMG or the "elusive" second echelon—includes the development and deployment of the family scatterable mines (FASCAM). The OMG, in order to obtain the maximum value inherent in such a structure and deployment, must have the maximum amount of flexibility available in order to conduct its assigned operations. As Mr. Donnelly states:

In Soviet eyes, remote mining (especially by multiple rocket launcher) poses one of the greatest threats to the successful committal and operation of the OMG.¹⁰

These mines would inhibit the movement of the OMG, as well as increase the reaction and movement times of the group.

Critical to all options, regardless of whether they are the deep attack or the "assault breaker" approach, is timely and accurate intelligence. The "see deep" aspect applies in all instances and is still considered to be the weakest functional area throughout all current and projected options. Secure data links between and among all terminals in the corps operational zone and within the corps commander's zone of interest are essential for target determination and analysis. Both the Soviet and the US advocates note that conditions of limited visibility are ideal for either the attack of the OMG or for the deep attack. Thus, systems that are not continuous, that cannot penetrate the literal "fog" of combat, that are not specific enough in data collection and correlation, or systems that are so expensive that only "one of a kind" per corps can be acquired will not meet the intelligence needs of the commander. If the deep attack option is selected, systems that will support the commander on a continuous, real time basis are essential; in fact, these systems are essential to both commanders—the operational commander and the commander of the deep attack force. If the operational concept enunciated in *FM 100-5* is to be followed, the attack force commander—in order to carry out the concept of the operational commander—must have the flexibility to alter his plan and the assets to collect and analyze the intelligence required to do so. (It should be noted that these elements are equally as critical in the assault breaker or CSW approach.)

Equally critical to the intelligence needs are the planning and operating skills of the corps commander and his staff. The Army is, and has been, operating in a divisional frame of reference. It appears as though all US general officers look forward to the day when they will be a division commander or look back on the days when they were one; and for the lesser ranks, the staff to serve on is a *division* staff. As pointed out earlier, the Germans concentrated on tactical versatility on the eastern front, while the Soviets favored making the operational level key to their successes on the same front. A recent study conducted by the Strategic Studies Institute noted the lack of doctrine for corps, the lack of indepth training for

planners, and the multiple missions for the corps staffs contributed to difficulties for the Army in the development of planners. These factors, carried from a peacetime environment into combat, may well spell serious planning difficulties for the commander at the operational level. This is the very level at which the deep attack is planned. The NATO corps commander will be faced by a Soviet commander who is well-steeped in flexibility at the operational level.

SUMMARY

The echelonment of units in the attack came about largely as a result of tactical imperatives within a strategic framework—a matter of scale and perspective. The development of the "see deep-attack deep" concept within the US Army was as much an effort to increase the scale of operations as it was an effort to reinstate initiative. It is important to consider the increase in scale of operations when one measures the span of Soviet operations and compares it with US activities. While the US Army has concentrated on division and below, the Soviets have focused on the Army level (roughly the equivalent of US corps), thus the areas of influence, operations, and interest are considerably larger than those the United States has practiced and trained at in recent years. The question of the second echelon then becomes one largely of Soviet tactical deployment and operations while the OMG, as the name implies, belongs in the operational arena, and, as such, forms a much closer linkage with strategic employment than does echelonment.

The OMG, as illustrated earlier, appears to be the Soviet approach to the avoidance of tactical nuclear conflict. It is an evolutionary change designed to reduce risk, perfect conventional capabilities, and yet keep a chemical option intact. By penetrating the forward defense and striking nuclear and chemical storage and weapons delivery sites before NATO can act and release the required nuclear weapons, the Soviets would be forcing the issue in their favor. Whereas, the US Army's concentration on the second echelon, and more precisely, the ill-defined and possibly nonexistent second echelon of either the front or the TVD, focuses matters on the tactical level, sidestepping or forestalling the strategic issues to a later time. However, to permit the "later time"

to arrive, the penetration will require weapons of mass destruction to seal off or delay the attack. Thus, a tactical act has escalated to the strategic arena. The Soviets, through the use of the operational scale elements, would be keeping the conflict within conventional bounds.

Any solution to this problem will have to be multifaceted and will include more than doctrine. Extensive training and operating at the operational level, improvements to the force structure (providing the corps commander with deep attack units other than divisions), equipment (intelligence collection and analysis, JSTARS), and weapons (CSW/CSWS) head up the list of possible solutions.

But what is *not* needed is an automatic reaction of looking for and attacking the second echelon. What is needed above all else is an understanding of the evolution of Soviet tactics and doctrine and an avoidance of the traditional American "checklist" usage of principles or concepts. The development of the OMG and the recent unclassified dissemination of related material is prime reason to challenge the ongoing airland battle thought process—not because the concept is wrong, but because nothing in the field of combat should be set in concrete and revered as dogma, whether it comes from Monroe, Leavenworth, or Frunze.

ENDNOTES

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2. Donn A. Starry, General, "Extending the Battlefield," *Military Review*, March 1981, p. 32.
3. US Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-1: The Army*, August 14, 1981, p. 13.
4. This concept of the role of operational art was most recently explored in a December 1981 *Military Review* article, "Grand Tactics," by Colonel Wallace Franz.
5. The coordination draft of *FM 100-5: Operations*, p. 2-7, as quoted in "The Operational Art of the Airland Battle," p. 4. The approved version of *FM 100-5*, August 20, 1982, altered the original language to read: "The operational level of war uses available military resources to attain strategic goals within a theater of war. Most simply, it is the theory of larger unit operations," p. 2-3.
6. John S. Doerfel, Lieutenant Colonel, "The Operational Art of the Airland Battle," *Military Review*, May 1982, p. 4.
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12. William R. Richardson, Lieutenant General, "Winning on the Extended Battlefield," *Army*, June 1981, p. 37.
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14. Vasili Ye Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View)*, Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1972, p. 185.
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22. *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*, Military Publishing House of the Ministry of Defense, Moscow, 1978, Vol. 6, p. 373. (Translation by Colonel Otto P. Chaney, US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute.)
23. Donnelly, p. 1179.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 1178.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 1183.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 1177.

27. Dupuy, p. 60.
28. Starry, p. 37.
29. Benjamin F. Schemmer, "Defense Resources Board, Congress Order Early IOC for 'Assault Breaker,'" *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 1982, p. 106.
30. Donnelly, p. 1186.

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US doctrine will be examined briefly as it has evolved from the 1976 time-frame to the present. The Deep attack doctrine will be discussed in detail in light of some of its frequently neglected implications. The Soviet doctrine, which the deep attack seeks to use in its favor, will be presented, as will the role of the Operational Maneuver Group (OMG).

The areas of potential conflict and risk will be explored in detail and the impact of the OMG will be analyzed. Using the extended battlefield concept, the Soviet threat against which that concept was based, and the evolving role of the OMG within Soviet echelonnement on the battlefield, a series of proposals will be presented as possible solutions or risk-reducing measures. The article will conclude with a brief section on the potential strategic implications of both the OMG and several of the proposed solutions, thereby illustrating the linkages among tactics, operational art, and military strategy.

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